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## Context to the nugget

Mouli talks about how he has made some of his early career moves based on the notion of fit. He also acknowledges that there is often an information asymmetry here and uses surrogate sources (profiles of others who have gone there and succeeded) of data as a means of determining if he would belong. He also emphasizes the criticality of focusing on learning rather than earning to drive professional growth over the long-term.

## Transcription

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**Deepak Jayaraman (DJ):** How did you think about opportunities early on in your career? What are some of the considerations you had in your head?

**Chandramouli Venkatesan (CV):** With my own example, I think very intuitively I did put a criteria of fit very early on even in my campus journey and I knew I have a certain kind of personality and if I were to name companies, I knew I wouldn't fit into Citi bank and nothing wrong about Citi bank it is just that my personality is different from what it takes to succeed.

**DJ:** and how did you get to that conclusion what's the data that you had about city bank you had at that time?

**CV:** Partly it sense and partly about who are the kind of people who you see go and succeed and you said that I am different than that kind of a person. Yes its more co-relations so I think fairly early on I didn't even applied to some of these companies even if they were day one. I said I don't have the style and personality to go and succeed there, my style is a little more grounded, little more data oriented less flam being so I do advocate to people I think we tend to in campuses make decisions primarily based on glamour and based on rankings I do advocate a slightly stronger fit element if you can into campus decision making that's I think one thing I would do. The second thing I would kind of try to change around which was in hindsight for me also, but I think I lucked out with strong mentors and I didn't make those poor choices but at the first five ten years out of college too much of our assessment of how well our career is going is based on comparing with others who passed out with us. I mean so you know we both passed out of the same B school that guy is in grade 5 I am in grade 4 that guy has a Mercedes with air-conditioning and I don't have and too much of our assessment of how well our career goes is based on comparing versus those who are passed out and I think the hindsight for me and what I have tried out to write in the book was evaluate how well your career is going based on how much you are learning? Do not evaluate how well your career is going based on visible markers versus others if your learning is growing your earning will grow, I always say manage your career for learning, earning follows, if you manage your career for earning neither comes so I think I would also say let's change the markers of how we evaluate? And out of B-School for 10 years

we tend to be very comparative in our approach. And based on superficial data, you go to somebody's house for the party and you say oh shit this guy is doing better than me in my career.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: The big takeaway for me here when I listen to Mouli talk about his early career choices and also the way he evaluated himself along the way, it is the notion of having a clear sense of who you are and what is unique about you. Anu Madgavkar, one of my earlier guests, a partner at McKinsey Global Institute talks about the notion of each one of us being a Segment of 1. After about 20 years post IIMA, I can say with reasonable conviction that the people who have done well and continue to rise are those that have a clear understanding of themselves, what their distinctive strengths are and what gives them energy. That is not to say that you have complete clarity on all these questions. But I would really urge individuals to start thinking about some of these questions rather than focusing on surface level metrics like earning which can be completely misleading.

## End of nugget transcription

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## About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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